

# ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

*EUTERPEAN AND SOPHRONIAN*

## LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE,

AT THE

*Second Annual Commencement,*

JUNE 23rd, 1869,

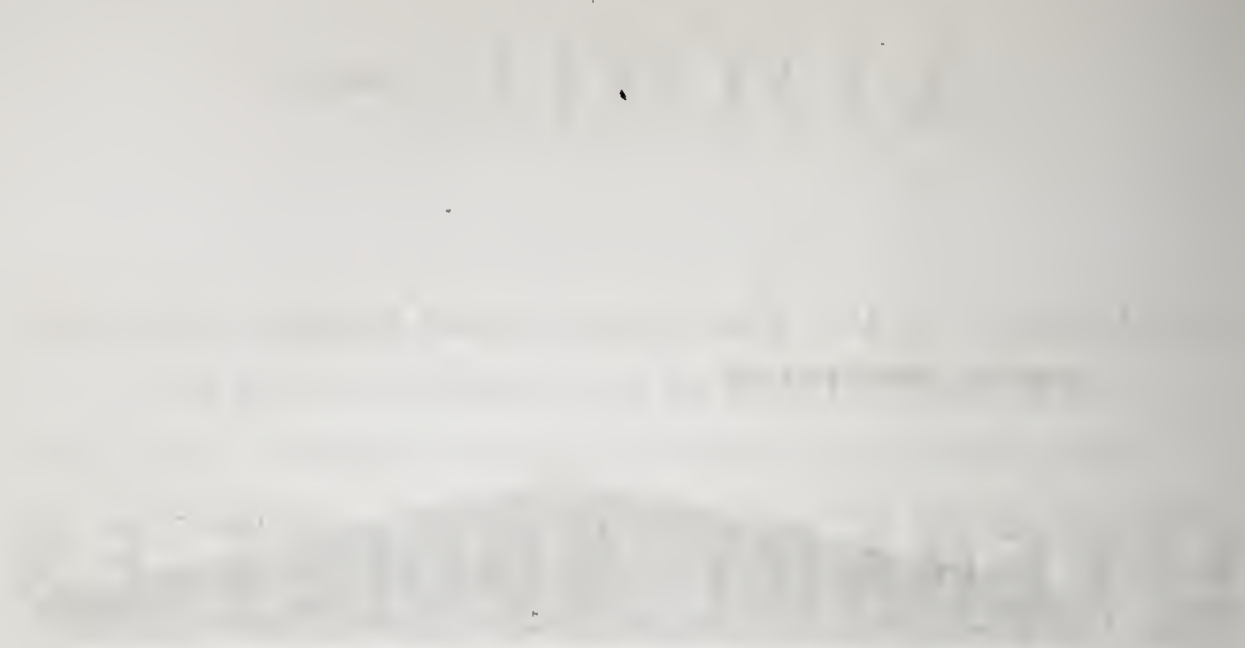
BY

CHARLES E. LEX, Esq.

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*Gentlemen of the Euterpian and Sophronian Literary Societies :*

I am before you this evening in compliance with your kind invitation, for a double purpose, to congratulate you and the Institution with which you are connected upon what has already been accomplished, and to offer you some few suggestions which, although trite and commonplace, may not be without their value in directing your future aims and purposes, as objects of her fostering care. I rejoice at being permitted to address a circle of young men, gathered together within the walls of a College reared upon the soil of our own good Commonwealth, who are here receiving the advantages of a liberal education. For I know that Pennsylvania has not always been foremost in rearing or encouraging such Seminaries of learning. Yet whilst in this respect she has been somewhat derelict in the past, she appears from recent indications to be endeavoring to retrieve herself, by efforts to raise her educational standard to an equality with those of her sisters in this happy Union, who have advanced further and achieved more in this direction, than what she has hitherto been enabled to accomplish.

It is true that in and by the common school system much has been done to infuse both moral and intellectual vigor into our whole community, but the best and brightest results that have been obtained from this source, can never supply the necessity which must always exist, for a higher order of education, one far in advance of what the school house or academy can furnish, a training place for men in the liberal arts and sciences, who mixing in the world can give tone and force and sentiment to the masses by whom they are surrounded. I know there is a disposition in modern times to depreciate such Institutions, to suggest their want of utility,

to undervalue them when regarded in what has been called a practical point of view, to deny their necessity — but every observant and reflecting mind must after due consideration, be brought to an opposite conclusion.

For what do these objectors ask us to relinquish? What would they have us consign to oblivion? What shall we sacrifice upon the altar of a presumed utility? Shall the culture of the dead languages cease and greater attention be paid to the living vehicles of thought? Who that is acquainted with the origin of the latter, but does not know that in almost all of them their vitality and strength and importance are mainly derived from the former. You might as well successfully attempt to dry up or divert the channels which form the origin of our noble rivers, and then look for them to flow in their accustomed volume towards the mighty ocean, as to ignore the ancient sources of all thought or attempt to dissever them from their modern offspring. — No — as surely as some massive structure rests upon its broad foundation stone, or the lofty collonade is supported by its tall and graceful columns, to remove which would destroy the edifice; so to disparage the ancient languages or cause their separation from any system of advanced education, would certainly result in its inefficiency and worthlessness.

Do they ask that the higher mathematics shall be set aside, and nothing be used but the rules of calculation required in the ordinary business of life? Who that knows any thing of their invigorating and strengthening influence upon the mental powers — their capability for stimulating the reasoning faculties — their utility in regulating the processes of thought and leading to accurate conclusions, but would regret their banishment from our academical halls, or a restriction of their employment to those few in number, who in after-life may devote themselves to such vocations as shall render their use indispensable.

And so we might go through the entire range of studies pursued in a College and with the same result. All in the

end will be found useful, and all proper and necessary in the formation of a true and accurate scholar. As any system of exercise which only tends to the development of the muscular forces of one part of our bodies, whilst the rest are neglected, will lead to a mishapen and disproportionate arrangement of the whole, so any educational scheme, which elevates one department to the neglect of another, will produce minds unevenly balanced and incapable of wide and expanded efforts. We need well educated men, and by that I mean highly educated men, those who can handle any department of literature or science ably and skillfully. — We require them as leaders to others, as those who shall allure others to follow in their footsteps — we need them as capable of judging what studies are best to be pursued, and as the directors of thought to those by whom they may hereafter be surrounded. The proper training for such a class of men can only be found in a system of collegiate instruction in its fullest and widest import. It may be said, and perhaps it is true, that a great deal of what is learned here will in a short time be entirely forgotten — but then the result has been gained, the great result it seems to me of scholastic discipline, the learning how to study and what to study, and this result applied to the learned professions or the ordinary pursuits of life will crown both with a degree of success, which a lower range of intellectual culture will fail of attaining. What a monotonous appearance the largest city in the world would present, if the eye in traversing its broad avenues rested continually and without intermission, upon rows of dwellings uniform in appearance and scarcely differing the one from the other — but how changed would it seem when diversified here and there by lofty and imposing structures, by public edifices displaying the highest skill of the architect and builder, by graceful spires now and then pointing heavenward.

And yet the result of the system of education here pursued, may not be so obvious to those who are subjected to its influence. They may wonder why so much is taught

which in individual instances may in after-life prove absolutely useless, and why so much time and labor is expended upon studies which in a short time are to be forgotten or overlooked. But the life of a student is to a large degree a life of faith. He follows a beaten track, hallowed by the footsteps of many illustrious men who have preceded him. He is led by ways which the ripened experience of ages has marked out; and the result is not completely realized, until maturer years shall convince him that his time has not been misspent, but that he has gathered a store of useful information and acquired such habits of diligent and persevering investigation, as shall render him capable of assuming any position which in God's wise providence he may be called upon to fill. A young man with a good education has a fortune at his disposal and may turn his attention to any occupation. He may enter life as a business man, but becoming tired of its duties may leave the marts of commerce and enter the learned professions — or having at the outset tried the latter, may exchange his professional career for the counting-house and store. Such results are not uncommon in this age and country. And with the men of this age and country you are to mingle in the ordinary walks of life, and if faithful to your responsibilities, you are to make upon them a lasting impression.

But what is there peculiar in the present age that renders it diverse from all others, or what are the characteristics of the men of the present age distinguishing them from those who have preceded us in the march of life. Although much is said to the contrary, I verily believe there is no great peculiarity about them, nor any thing to mark them from the unnumbered thousands who have gone before. Men and mankind are the same now that they have ever been — with the same habits of thought — the same propensities — same passions, the same loves, and hatreds, and desires, that have from the days of Adam characterized the race. Doubtless in many things we are superior to our forefathers — we know more and perhaps have achieved

more than they — but the increase of knowledge has not made men different from what they have ever been, or changed their natural propensities or dispositions. I know there is an inclination amongst the old ladies of both sexes to look upon matters and events around them as if every thing was going to destruction — I know their propensity to institute unfavorable comparisons between the present and the past, but there is no real ground for any such misgivings or such bitter criticisms. No doubt they point very gravely to the young of the present day and say, if you had but lived when we were of your age, how differently you would have been trained. But when saying this they have only repeated what their superiors in age told them, they have but uttered a proverb as old as the world itself, and to be handed down from generation to generation, until time shall be no longer. — For doubtless the youth of the present day shall hereafter look with pious horror upon the performance of those just stepping into life, who shall then surround them, and only wish that their youthful friends had received the training to which they are now subjected.

The world is not growing any worse than it was, but on the contrary is a great deal better than it has ever been. I am pointed to the newspapers by these misanthropes and am asked, whether I conscientiously believe what I assert, in view of their columns almost daily filled with the record of murders and villanies and crimes; and I fearlessly answer, these things do not change the conclusions to which I have arrived and which I have just announced. It is true that iniquity abounds, but it has always abounded. The population of the globe is much larger than it ever was, but crime has not increased in proportion to the increase of population. The magnetic wires concentrate into our newspapers daily the records not only of our own immediate neighborhood, but those of our own state — of the union and of the world. And then it must be remembered that every instance of dereliction is now brought out openly into view — there is very little in the way of iniquity concealed from the pub-

lic gaze — we all love excitement and the columns of the daily gazette are considered dull and stale without some new horror, and something that shall cause men to look aghast and wonder what is next to happen. But side by side with such appalling subjects, there are there recorded deeds of philanthropy and tenderness and love, which conclusively demonstrate that goodness is in the ascendant and that in the moral government of the world, whilst evil does exist, yet it is overshadowed and excelled by benevolence and virtue. — Take up the records of the past and you will read the same history of men in all ages and under all circumstances. The proverbs of Solomon give us the same picture of men existing then as now. Misplaced trust and confidence resulted the same then as now. — for says the wise man “He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it, and he that hateth suretyship is sure.” The tricks of the trade as they are familiarly called were as common then as now. — “It is naught, it is naught saith the buyer, but when he is gone his way then he boasteth.” And I presume it is true now as it was then, if any are unfortunate enough to be placed in such a position “That it is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house.” In point of fact the book I have referred to gives an accurate picture of human life at the present day; and there is not a vice, or sin, or crime, which then disgraced our race, but which will easily find its counterpart now in men living all around us. The old Egyptian tombs reveal the same story of a love for creature comforts, of indulgence in dress, in amusements, in fashionable entertainments, and dissipation existing in the courts of the Pharaohs, as in the circles of opulence and fashion at the present day. And to turn to another subject. How often are the young men of the present day branded as degenerate and frivolous and totally unworthy of comparison with the youths of former times. But I take up the old writers — those good old satirists of Rome, who depict the young bloods of their age in language of as much real criticism, as can be bestowed upon

those who now figure in our community — gay and fanciful in their costumes and manners now expanding and now contracting their garments, as the inexorable laws of fashion dictate. I see the young Roman with his summer ring and his winter ring, his toga thrown jauntily over his shoulder, his jovial countenance all aglow with the warmth of a southern sky, as he throws himself languidly into the hands of the barber, like his counterpart at the present day and desires him to shave his beardless chin, or perchance to assist him in coaxing out and colouring the slight indications of it which nature has dispensed. Read the pages of these ancient worthies and you will find the same pictures of society which now meet our vision on every side. See the epicure who could distinguish with nicety of taste the olive plucked by the glove from that taken by the uncovered hand, or who could feast himself upon the tongues of larks and the oysters of Circei, or quench his thirst with the delicate Falernum or Lesbian cooled with snow or heated with boiling water. You can see both Dives and Lazarus any day of your life, or behold those ornamental members of society of whom it has been truthfully said “They toil not neither do they spin nor gather into barns.” And yet the seniors in the times to which we have referred gave counsels of wisdom to their younger brethren, by which they should have profited. Who can read the exquisite picture given by Horace of his father — with such inimitable grace as to challenge the admiration of every student — of the old man as he gives counsel and advice to his brilliant son, and not feel there was sterling worth and merit in that licentious age, worthy of study in these modern days of refinement and civilization. Take up Shakspeare and the same views of human life and character will be found impressed upon every page of the great poet. Listen to the instruction which the crafty Polonius gives to his son, and see how well it suits the present generation.

“Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar  
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:  
Take each man’s censure, but reserve thy judgment

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
 But not expressed in fancy ; rich, not gaudy :  
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man.  
 This above all to thine own self be true :  
 And it must follow, as the night the day  
 Thou can'st not then be false to any man."

No! I do not believe the race has deteriorated and I trust I may never become so imbecile as to believe it. Rather has there been a progress in the right direction, and physically, mentally and morally we are in the advance of those who have preceded us.

When before did philanthropy reach the height which she has now attained? When were charities so numerous, or dispensed with so lavish a hand? When were the poor and outcast and wretched so cared for, so sympathized with, and so relieved? And it would be a disgrace to Christianity if these virtues did not abound—for to admit that the world has gone backward and not forward, is to admit that there is no elevating and ennobling power in religion and no ability to preserve our common humanity from sinking to the lowest depths of degradation.

And yet there are some characteristics which mark the present age, and render it in a degree unlike its predecessors. And these result in a large measure from the progress made in science and scientific researches, and from the wonderful discoveries and inventions which have been brought to perfection in every department of knowledge since the commencement of the present century. It is true there has scarcely been a century since the world has been in existence, that has not produced something remarkable—led men to new inquiries and helped them onward in the march of improvement. I have often thought what a startling effect must some of the stirring events of the world's history, have produced upon those who witnessed them. How the Crusades must have excited all Europe. How the discovery of America—the art of printing—the use of gunpowder—the revival of letters, and the glorious reformation must have aroused the world, and led thinking ones to ask them-

selves if there remained any greater discoveries or more brilliant progress in the realms of morals or knowledge. And what wonderful results in the same direction have been accomplished during the last fifty years. We are so accustomed by this time to their daily use, that we scarcely comprehend their importance. Railroads — telegraphs — stereotyping — lithography and photography — steam navigation and a host of other inventions so surround us, and are so familiar to us by every day use, that we can scarcely realize the fact, that they were unknown when the year 1800 was ushered in. New machinery accomplishes quickly, what the slow toiling labor of the hands formerly only brought to perfection after long and severe effort. — Even the farmer employs it in cultivating the ground and gathering in the fruits of the harvest, whilst our houses are lighted with gas and heated with coal, and cleansed with water, in a manner that would make one of the past century, could he revisit the earth, stare with wonder and astonishment, and ask himself whether after all he was not dreaming. And depend upon it the ages to come, will so advance in the same direction that could we now be transported one hundred years hence, we too should become incredulous and surprised.

And what has been the effect upon the men of this generation? We have been called a fast age, and so indeed we are. Time and space are annihilated. — We are impatient under detention, ever ready to move forward and anxious to accomplish in a moment anything which strikes our fancy, or demands our efforts, and so there is sometimes exhibited an immaturity of thinking, which is in keeping with these characteristics. Especially has this been the case in the department of history, in which the verdict of the past upon certain noted characters has been endeavored to be set aside, untill every bad man and woman who has ever lived has found an apologist, except perhaps Judas Iscariot, and I am not so certain but he may soon have a circle of admiring sympathizers. And so in book making. If in the days of Solomon it had no end, what is it now but endless.

And that too without much originality. Old truths and exploded notions are hashed and rehashed time and again and attempted to be palmed upon the community as fresh and nourishing. In science of all kinds there are new discoveries, but these are rather for its votaries than for the multitude. Science is made popular and accessible to the comprehension of all, and that with good result, but it is interesting to the few, whilst the popular literature of the day swallowed eagerly by the masses, is not of the dignified and excellent character which should characterise it. It is the day of magazines and journals of all kinds — and when well directed, in no more agreeable form can truth be communicated — but as a mark of the age the sensational sometimes becomes predominant in these, and the more startling the matter with which they are filled, the better are they received.

It has been called a practical age, and so it is. So practical that it seems to have lost all veneration for the past, and for the records of the past. The old well accredited stories of the founding of Rome, of Romulus and Remus, the siege of Troy, and even of William Tell, have been shaken to pieces, and reduced to the conditions of myths. The practical hand has been felt in history as in every department of literature, and in rubbing away the dust of centuries, old and incorrect notions have necessarily been dispelled. Long established modes of education are now being subjected to the same influence, whether for its improvement or deterioration, time alone can determine. Antiquity furnishes no protection to any thing, and he who would gain credit for any thing by a mere appeal to the past, and a reference alone to time honored usages, would succeed as well; as would an old Egyptian, should he now appear upon the exchange, and attempt to borrow money upon the mummy of his father or grandfather, an excellent collateral in the days of the Pharoahs, but now unknown in the list of stocks and securities.

And, yet there must be theory as well as practice.

Brain is as necessary as muscle, and thought and invention are as important, as the actual exhibition of results in every day use. Some are fitted for the one station, and some for the other. Give the one an idea and he will work it out, and bring it to a result which the originator could not have accomplished. Sometimes both qualities are united, and then the results of both mental and physical exertion become apparent. The men of one idea however are those who have made deep impressions upon our common humanity. The old senator of Rome, who repeated at the close of every oration *delenda est Carthago*, worked out the purpose of that small sentence, when the rival of Rome was destroyed. The inventor of the steam engine, watched the lid of the tea-pot as it was moved by the heated vapor underneath, and carried out that one thought in furnishing a motive power for the complicated machinery of the world. Jenner in his great discovery of vaccination carried out this one idea untill he subdued for the human race, a direful and malignant foe. Our own Fulton had his one idea, and he never rested until steam navigation was the result, commerce received an impetus such as she had never experienced before. Luther was a man of one idea, and so vigorously did he deal his blows upon antiquated and erroneous doctrines, that freedom of religious thought and from tyrannical oppression was purchased not only for his countrymen, but for the world.

These men combined in themselves both theory and practice. Ten thousand lids had, before the days of Watt, been raised by the same power, but the observant eye of the boy first caught the idea which led him to so successful a result. Reform and reformation had been long thought of and talked over before the days of Luther, but he first had the vigor and mental energy requisite to make these powerful and impressive.

But such men are rare, and frequently are stimulated to the performance of what renders them remarkable, by the suggestions of others. A great need is discovered, and

numbers are employed in supplying it, and while many fail, one alone is successful in overcoming the difficulty. The suggestions of an accurate modern thinker is correct, that some men seemed raised up especially, to bridge over a dark chasm which others have failed to cross. But the failures of others have led to the success of those who have followed them. Let us honor equally the theorist and practical man. The world requires both, and both are necessary for the advancement of our race.

Into this busy practical world you are preparing to enter my young friends, and if you will not take it amiss, let me give you some few hints relative to the formation of your characters and the preparation you should make in view of your future career in life.

And let me advise you first of all to be students. And by that I mean those who are not satisfied until they have mastered the difficulties of every subject presented for their consideration.

Treasure up results to be used on future occasions. Store them well away in the magazine of the brain and depend upon it some time or other, you will find plenty of opportunities for their employment. Some men have only a dim and confused notion of what they have learned, resulting entirely from their failing to master the subjects presented for their consideration, and they pass through life with cloudy and obscure ideas, instead of clear and lucid ones. And study too without any fixed and determined plan as to what end your studies are to be directed. I would have a young man go through college without his being specially educated for any profession or occupation.

Let him when he has finished his course and received his degree, and after the excitement connected with commencement day has been dissipated, sit down calmly and seriously, and ask himself what he is fitted for, and for what employment he is suited. We have a beautiful word in our English language which embodies the thought I am en-

deavoring to express — the word CALLING. What is your calling? To what station or profession or occupation has God called you, fitted you for and endowed you with the talent and acquirements necessary to carry it out successfully?

Very frequently a young man it seems to me is treated injudiciously by his friends as well as by himself in this particular.

From some supposed brilliancy of talent, or what is properly called smartness, he receives a classical education, with a direct view to one of the learned professions, when in point of fact he is not fitted for them. And thus it comes to pass that a poor lawyer or a still poorer physician or clergyman is the result, when out of the same material a thriving merchant or artisan could have been successfully carved. How many go through College with a vague notion that hereafter they will fill the highest offices in church or state, that some day or other D. D. or L. L. D. will be affixed to their names — that they will become editors or writers or amaze the world by their literary productions — or perchance if they have a taste for politics that they will become eminent statesmen, Congressmen, Senators or even Presidents of the United States, when in point of fact no such distinguished honors are in reserve for them. Every occupation in life that can be honestly followed, may worthily be followed and the pursuit be ennobled too by an educated man. If therefore you find your mind directed towards a professional life follow it — if towards business or manufactures or commerce or husbandry, select any of these, the most suited to your taste or inclination. But having made the choice deliberately and calmly, seek not to alter it without sufficient cause. Some men go from one occupation to another and tire so speedily of every new one they attempt, that in the end they become so completely unsettled that disaster and ruin are the inevitable results.

There is one characteristic of the age which may be deemed in some respects a favorable one, and that is, that

second rate abilities have now a better chance for success than heretofore. In former years in our learned professions no one could rise to any position of eminence unless possessed of extraordinary powers or commanding talent, but now the case is different.

In my own profession for instance, when but a comparatively small number of books formed a lawyer's library, a man might by unremitting study have risen to the head of his profession—but now so vast and increasing are the volumes to which he must resort, so much now must be read and studied—the decisions of so many tribunals must be collected and compared, that eminence in the broad sense in which it was used some years ago is hardly attainable. And so too in theology. So well and thoroughly have the scriptures been examined and commented upon, and so conscientiously has every passage of holy writ been criticised and subjected to the nicest scrutiny, that he must be a divine of great and commanding powers, who shall add to the wisdom of the old Doctors who have preceded him.

But with all this, there is a greater demand for substantial learning than ever. The farmer no longer follows the beaten track of his ancestors, or prepares his ground, or alternates his crops after the well known traditions of former years. Farming is now a science, demanding for its successful prosecution a knowledge of chemistry and chemical combinations, and of the teachings of nature which in times gone by, were unknown or treated with contempt or indifference. In manufactures what a wonderful scope there has arisen for a display of the highest education and the greatest mental ability. In fact, in all the occupations of life, as at present carried on, he is the most successful who brings to his aid the advantages of a well trained intellect and of extended knowledge. For all of these you are being fitted, and upon all of them you can bring to bear the studies and knowledge imparted to you here.

One result should flow from the life of a student which seems to me to be of great importance, I mean the habit of

some definite conclusion, as to the matter brought to your consideration, and of forming direct and permanent opinions upon all the topics you are called upon to investigate. Study a doubtful question well, weigh it thoroughly — place argument against argument, and suggestion against suggestion, but come at last to some final result and abide by it. There are too many men in the world, and especially in the educated world, who have no definite opinions upon any subject. They are blown about by every wind of doctrine — now thinking this way to-day and contrary-wise to-morrow — led captive by every novelty that presents itself, and disposed to look at every thing in any new light that may be cast upon it. Like the old courtier in Hamlet, “the cloud is like a camel or backed like a weasel, or very like a whale,” as the fancy or persuasive reasoning of another may suggest. The consequence is, that no dependence can be placed upon them, when questions of importance present themselves for decision. You cannot tell upon which side they will be. Now expressing a positive opinion, now yielding to a contrary view, desirous of pleasing all and shifting and turning from side to side, as caprice, or fancy, or an outside pressure may dictate, they are uncertain, unreliable and untrustworthy. Too many of those, usually denominated conservative, are men of this stamp, — men not to be depended upon in an emergency. I had rather see a person stubbornly wrong and determinedly so, provided it is the result of investigation on his part, and of honest determination to find out the truth — than come into contact with this double thinker — this inconclusive reasoner — this weak-kneed advocate of opposing and contrary sentiments. For this stubbornly wrong man is honest and may be open to conviction — but the trimmer is dishonest and entitled to no respect.

Beware too of your doubting men. — Men who have no positive opinions at all, but doubt every thing and are skeptical upon every point. Men who are unwilling to be convinced that anything is real, but who affect to regard every-

thing as spurious and uncertain. Skeptical in religions — heterodox as far as faith is concerned — unsympathetic, snarling and cynical — they have fault to find with everything, and are satisfied with nothing. Argument with them is meat and drink, and they are forever battling with what others admit as proper and right. They are always engaged in tearing down, but never in building up the edifice of truth — uprooting but never planting, and are only happy when they force others to become as uncertain as themselves.

And sometimes men of this character have regarded themselves as great men and as worthy of admiration. Such have been the infidels who have infested the earth — the Voltairs and Volneys, and Gibbons, Humes, Rosseaus and Renans and Paines who have carped at and cursed and blasphemously assailed what other men have regarded with reverence and love, without offering any substitute for the volume of inspiration, or the holy religion emanating therefrom.

Not that doubting should be always discouraged. For all doubt as Tennyson remarks is not devil-born, but it does become fiendish when persevered in after opportunity is offered for examination. Unresolved doubt is bad, and to be avoided — but honest doubt, which leads a man to close and accurate investigation — which obliges him to pursue the subject which perplexes him until he reaches a determined and well defined result, is rather a healthful mental condition, and will tend to intellectual invigoration, when the solution of the point at issue is reached. Who in his day has not undergone this process of doubting, and been sorely perplexed between conflicting arguments, until the tangled web has been unravelled and order again assumed her legitimate sway.

But there is another class of men who are perpetually waging war with the community, of a different type from those whom we have been considering. They are neither those whose opinions are wavering, nor yet doubters — but on the contrary those who are positive in magnifying their

own abilities, and are continually charging those around them, that their talents are undervalued, and they, the possessors of them unappreciated. It is true, that eminence and worth are not always valued as they should be. Columbus sought in vain for a long time for a friendly arm on which to lean. Fulton committed his little steamboat to the waters, amidst the jeers and sneers of the spectators on the wharf, who asked him when he proposed to return in his adventurous craft. Jenner encountered all sorts of opposition when he first attempted to introduce vaccination, and was met by the most specious arguments, from those who should have known better, but these men persevered in carrying out their views, knowing that they were right, and that the verdict of after-generations would sustain them. But those of whom I am now speaking have no single idea of any consequence, except indeed of their own importance — whilst they accuse the whole world of being unsympathetic, and of bestowing upon them harsh and cruel treatment. They are not content to sit down in the lowest room and wait until they are called — up higher, but presume themselves capable of filling the highest offices at once. Receiving perchance the cold shoulder, or finding their pretensions met by indifference, they lay not the blame upon themselves, but upon others. But true genius is almost always accompanied by modesty, and seeks to rise by its own merits and not by pretension. The vender of quackery is perpetually advertising his own wares and displaying them pretentiously to the public gaze, and you may find the same characteristics in the man, who is constantly obtruding himself upon others, and accusing the world generally of being oblivious to his talents.

Such men imagine themselves discoverers of new modes of thought, of new interpretations of old formulas, and as having brought to light something that has escaped the vigilance of others besides themselves. But let it be remembered that in these days the communication of a new truth can only be expected from a genius of the highest

order, that originality is rare, that the beaten tracks have been too frequently travelled to admit of any new suggestions, and that truisms and commonplaces are with what we now-a-days have to do. Another defect which marks a great many men of education and good parts, is a want of common sense. Brimfull very frequently of learning, they have not the power of using it profitably, and whilst the intellect may be cultivated to the highest point of perfection, this non-essential trait is entirely wanting. The man of good common sense is worth a thousand men of genius without it, and when it is used by one in whose mental qualifications we have confidence, there is no estimating the happy results that flow from it. Naaman the Syrian is bid "to go wash in the Jordan seven times for the recovery of his leprosy," and he turns away from the Man of God in indignation and scorn. He is saved from his foolish determination by the suggestion of a little good common sense advice on the part of his followers, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, would'st thou not have done it; how much rather then when he saith, wash and be clean."

And this attribute properly employed, will do much in this jarring world, so full of angry and heated discussions, and paltry misunderstandings, to harmoize and soothe the minds upon which its influence is exerted. Like oil upon the water it will allay strife—cool the fever of disputation—and resolve the doubts of the irresolute and wavering. A really practical man must be a man of common sense. He will exercise it in great emergencies when all positive rules fail, or where the principals that should ordinarily govern, become impracticable or absurd. It has been the leading trait of all great men and was happily illustrated in our noble Washington, the great Jackson, our martyred Lincoln, as it now makes eminent the accomplished General who wields the destinies of this vast Republic.

Some men have no determination and no firmness. They have never learned to say these simple words, yes or

no, and to stand by them when said. Led aside by temptation, they become the prey of the vicious and abandoned, and stand as beacons to warn others of danger. Scorn and derision and laughter are powerful engines in distributing good resolutions, but that man alone is honorable and worthy of true regard who can resist these malign influences, and courageously maintain his ground against every opponent.

Soon my young friends you will be surrounded by men whose characters I have traced, and soon the busy and active duties of life will require of you an exhibition of the spirit in which you expect to encounter them. It is one of the results of our liberal institutions, and the necessities, if I may so speak, of our country, which impose great responsibilities upon the young. They are expected to assume positions at an early age, which rightly should devolve upon men of greater maturity. But our young men are expected to work for themselves as soon as they are able, for every man here is the architect of his own fortunes and but rarely the inheritors of wealth, and leisure, and thus the burden of life is soon cast upon them. It is true that the circumstances to which we have adverted, are apt to make a few of them presumptuous — perhaps even arrogant in style and pretentious — but what of it — we must accept the evil with the good, and wait for the time which is soon coming, when experience will teach them wisdom, and help to ripen the otherwise premature fruit. I am willing to accord to them all they demand — with this qualification, that they do not utterly disdain those who are advanced in life, or presume that all the stores of wisdom are centered in themselves. Fresh blood is always necessary to keep the body healthy and active, but maturity is the work of time, under whose mellowing processes the best and happiest results are attained.

Improve then every opportunity presented to you here, for intellectual and moral improvement. Both are necessary to constitute a good citizen. The education of the

head is of no avail if the heart is left neglected. The responsibility of living is great. Tell me not how a man has died — what bitter repentance and contrition and promises of amendment may have been extorted in the dying hour — but let me know how he lived — what impression he made upon those around him — whether the savour of his example was for good or evil, and I will give you a just estimate of his character, and tell you whether his memory is to be cherished or execrated. Strive then in honorable and manly competition with each other to see who can be the best and most faithful student — the most diligent learner, the ripest and maturest scholar. Remember too how much you are indebted to the faithful professors and instructors, upon whom rests the responsibility of imparting to you all that may be needful for qualifying you hereafter for positions of importance. Their task is but poorly recompensed, if we consider the labour and anxious care it involves; but you can make the load appear lighter, by availing yourselves of every opportunity that may afford you for advancement, and by cheerfully and willingly submitting yourselves to their reasonable requirements.

In the training to which I have alluded, the exercises of your societies are not to be overlooked. In debate — in composition — in delivery — in competition one with another, in all the varied exercises you are there called upon to perform, much can be gained to give you intellectual vigor and strength, and to prepare you for the sharper contests you may have to encounter in the world. Here you will form friendships which will never be forgotten, and be imbued with fond recollections which can never be obliterated.

From here, in a short time you are to enter into the world, its business — its trials and temptations. Prepare to meet them resolutely — manfully and heroically. Be not puffed up with the opinion that your education is completed here, for this is but the commencement of that gathering in of knowledge, which, to really earnest students,

is a life-long process. Be not doubters, or suggesters of doubt to others — disputants for the mere sake of disputation, full of heterodox opinions for the mere sake of display, but sincere seekers after truth — impartial observers of manners and men; and ready without prejudice or preconceived notions to come to an honest conviction and solution of any doubts or difficulties, that may press upon you. Avoid misanthropy. Do not think your talents or powers are undervalued — but do your best to command success. Be kind, and affable and pleasant in your intercourse with others, and depend upon it, the result will equal your most sanguine expectations. Above all things, arm yourself with good common sense — never speak without thinking, and when you speak, speak to the purpose, throw oil upon the troubled waters of strife — have settled opinions of your own, but let others see you are no partisan and not intolerant of the views of others. An old writer says well: God has made man with two eyes and two ears, and with but one mouth, to indicate that they are to see a great deal and hear a great deal, but to talk very little. Would that our public men, our Congressmen and Legislators could be taught a little of the common sense manifested in this observation.

Above all things endeavor to do good. This an educated man is bound to do. He has no right to retain his store of knowledge, and refuse to dispense it to others, but it is his bounden duty to scatter it abroad with a lavish hand, for general profit and advantage. Be not selfish, or devoted only to the pursuits you may hereafter embrace — but go outside of them, and take an active part in the benevolent and philanthropic schemes which are now in progress for the benefit of the race, and for ministering to the wants of the poor and oppressed.

My address would be incomplete, and my task but partially performed, did I not also ask you, if you have not done so already, to take your stand as Christian young men — for a Christian gentleman is the highest type of man, and

nothing is so impressive as the sight of a young man taking upon himself the vows of religion, and maintaining them with all the energy of which he is capable. Under the old testament dispensation, Abraham, and under the new St. Paul may be held up as models of gentlemen, and upon such models, and with their faith, I would have your characters completed and finished.

I have spoken to you this evening simply and plainly, and have only repeated truths which have been enforced upon you, and commended to your attention, by those to whom your education is entrusted. A young man to me is always an object of interest. I am willing to enter into his views — to take his stand point in the examination of every subject, to treat him, not dogmatically, but with reason, to assure him of my sympathy, and to wish him success. In a few short years you will either rejoice at having followed the kindly advice given you during your collegiate training, or deeply regret that it has been forgotten and despised.

I feel, however, that all of you, who hear me to-night, will adopt the suggestions made to you in this institution, and become the beloved sons of your *alma mater*, those of whom she may justly be proud. May every blessing attend you through life — may success crown all your efforts — may your fondest expectations be realized, and when, having faithfully performed your duty, you come to depart, may the close of your life be serene, and from your dying lips be heard the exulting strains of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing.”